

Tract # 7.  
On the Witness of the  
Spirit

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ON THE

## WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 1 Cor. ii, 10.*

ARE you a penitent sinner? Has your heart been broken by the righteous law being brought home to your conscience? And are you now mourning on account of your numerous sins against God? Have you resolved, by the grace of God, to turn unto him with all your heart? If this be your state of mind, then you would not deceive your soul in the all-important work of salvation, for a thousand worlds. The cry of your heart is, Lord show me the good and right way, and I will walk therein.

Know then, that it is your privilege to have God's Spirit *bearing witness with your spirit that you are his child.* Rom. viii, 16. Mark well! The witness of the Spirit is not regeneration or justification; but it is an *inward testimony* to your spirit, that you *are now* justified in the sight of God. "After ye believed," said St. Paul to the Ephesians, "ye were SEALED with that holy Spirit of promise." i, 13. Again, chap. iv, 30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are SEALED unto the day of redemption." This witness of the *holy Spirit* is promised to all those who are called into the fellowship of the Gospel: Acts ii, 38, 39. "Then said Peter unto them; repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Here the Apostle Peter declares that the *Holy Spirit* is promised to *all that are afar off*, to all that the *Lord our God*

*shall call*, in every age, nation and country: the promise is therefore to you; for your penitence, your mourning, and your prayers, are a sure indication that God hath called you. This *promise* to which the Apostle alludes, is that which the Lord Jesus, previous to his crucifixion, made to his desponding disciples: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."—"When he, the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." John xvi, 7, 13. And this promise of the *Comforter*, or the Holy Spirit, the sacred scriptures declare to be the common privilege of all believers.

Whenever, therefore, your heart is changed by the grace of God, and you are justified through faith in the Lord Jesus, you will have this *Holy Spirit of promise*, by which you shall know, that you are an "heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ." Rom. viii, 17. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we *might know* the things which are freely given to us of God." 1 Cor. ii, 12. Do not then deceive your own soul with a false hope. The true Christian believer does not *hope* that he is born of God; but he has an *inward witness* that he is "Passed from death unto life," and that he is now in the favour of God.

Hope is not fixed upon *present*, but upon *future* objects. What a man *now hath* in possession, he does not hope to have: we neither hope for the *past* nor *present*, but for the *future*. It is true, the Christian hath a "hope as an anchor to his soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, who is made an highpriest for ever." Heb. vi, 19, 20.

But this hope is founded on a knowledge, arising from the witness of the Spirit, of our present *acceptance in the beloved*.

When a sinner is awakened to a sense of his lost estate,



and determines by God's assistance to forsake his sins, and return unto the Lord, he has a right to *hope* that God will pardon him : Having received this pardon by faith in the Redeemer, he then, if he persevere in holiness, has a right to *hope*, that God will sanctify or *cleanse him from all unrighteousness* : and while he walks in obedience to God's commandments, he has reason to *hope* that God will take him to Heaven : Thus the true believer has a well-grounded *hope* of future happiness, because he enjoys the *abiding witness* of the Spirit in his heart that he is now a child of God.

From this view of the subject, you perceive that the hope of the experienced Christian is grounded upon his present knowledge of having been brought into the favour of God ; and this knowledge is the result of the witness of God's Spirit, testifying to him that his sins are pardoned, for the sake of Jesus Christ.—Reader ! have you this witness ? this knowledge of your acceptance in the beloved ?

Call it not enthusiasm. It is the height of enthusiasm to expect to be saved without experiencing this evidence of divine favour. The way to heaven is marked in the sacred Scriptures ; and mankind are threatened with everlasting destruction if they do not walk in it : but would God threaten men with entire destruction for not walking in that way, and yet, never let them know whether they were in it or not ! Impossible. It would be cruelty—and cruelty belongs not to the God of the Bible. The Bible describes the characters which are proper candidates for the kingdom of Heaven ; and how shall we know whether or not we are those candidates ? We must compare ourselves with those descriptions in God's word.—Such candidates are said to be *born of God*, to have the *love of God in their hearts*, to bring forth the *fruits of righteousness*, to have the *fruits of the Spirit*, which are “ Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”—Gal. v, 22, 23. How can these

fruits of the Spirit appear unless the Spirit itself be in the heart? And where will you look for these fruits, but in your heart, your tempers, words, and actions? "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

1 John v, 10.

Behold then, penitent, mourning sinner, your unspeakable privilege! Know assuredly that, in order to be happy in Heaven, you must first have this testimony of the Spirit, to give you a satisfactory evidence that you stand justified before God, by faith in Jesus Christ. Do not, therefore, conclude yourself a Christian, merely because you have had some sorrow for sin, have externally reformed, have been baptized, and because you belong to the Church, and partake of her ordinances. All these things are good in their place. But you must go further. To have the comforts and advantages of religion, you must have a real change of heart: and when this change is wrought by the eternal Spirit, *you shall have the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit, that you are passed from death unto life.* Has this radical change been wrought in you? Examine impartially. Search deep. Build not upon the *sand* of a *false* hope. If you have it not yet, then cry mightily to God. Wrestle—agonize in prayer, until God speaks to your soul in accents of love. Then you can experimentally sing,

My God is reconciled,  
His pardoning voice I hear;  
He owns me for his child,  
I can no longer fear;  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
And Father, Abba Father, cry.

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PUBLISHED BY N. BANGS AND J. EMORY,  
For the Methodist Episcopal Church, and for the New-York Methodist Tract  
Society, at the Conference Office, 13 Crosby-street.

*Azer Hays, Printer.*

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Syracuse, N. Y.  
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